

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515-3204**

25 February 2015

President Barack Obama  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President,

As the representative for New York's fourth congressional district and a member of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs, I wish to bring to your attention an issue of great concern to me and to my constituents on Long Island, regarding a recent decision by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to deny \$250,000 in rental assistance vouchers to a nonprofit organization in North Amityville, NY that provides housing and support to homeless military veterans and their families. Difficult as it is for me to believe, the justification for this decision was the fact that the veterans had already moved into the facility, and thus were no longer technically homeless.

Opened last fall, Liberty Village offers not only independent housing, but access to on-site caseworkers and the comprehensive support services that veterans and their families need as they adjust to civilian life – especially those who have previously been homeless, living in shelters, cars or on the street. If given the opportunity to carry out its mission, Liberty Village has the potential to make a tremendous difference in the lives of Long Island's significant homeless veteran population, and could serve as a model facility for neighboring communities to follow. However, in light of HUD's misguided decision to deny rental assistance vouchers, the facility's future is now in jeopardy.

Concern for Independent Living, the non-profit that operates Liberty Village, first applied for rental assistance vouchers before the facility opened. Although that application was denied, they re-applied and opened their doors to 30 veterans and their families in September, eager to execute their mission and trusting that the funds would be made available. Their second application was initially approved in October, but HUD reversed their decision last week on the basis, as I've said, that these veterans were no longer technically homeless.

After submitting their second application, the men and women who opened and operate this facility were faced with a decision – to take 30 veterans and their families off the street and give them the housing, support and stability they need, or to tell them to wait until the money came through. They chose the former, and to punish them for doing so would be a great injustice not

only to the veterans who served our country, but also to the men and women who dedicate their lives to serving our veterans.

Again, Mr. President, the denial of rental assistance vouchers jeopardizes the future of Liberty Village – and of the veterans who have found homes there – and severely limits the resources that can be spent on comprehensive care and support, which undermines the facility's core mission.

You have frequently declared your commitment to ending veteran homelessness in America, and I have tremendous respect for the work you've done in pursuit of that goal. Thus, I trust that you will give this matter your personal attention. Quite frankly, Mr. President, you have the power to overturn HUD's decision, and in doing so you will have a direct and immediate impact on the lives of 30 military veterans, plus many more if Liberty Village is granted the freedom to execute their mission for years to come and serve as a model for other communities to emulate.

I thank you for your time and attention, and I look forward to your response. Please contact me at your convenience should you wish to discuss this matter further.

Sincerely,



KATHLEEN M. RICE  
Member of Congress

cc: Secretary Julián Castro  
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development  
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